

# The Millennium Development Goals **Will Asia and the Pacific Achieve Them?**



**HER FUTURE** ADB is well placed to continue its role as a valuable global partner in helping developing member countries achieve the MDGs by 2015

Richie Abrina

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## ACHIEVING THE MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS

# Realistic, Possible?

Local partnership, harmonization, and commitment all critical for success

By Graham Dwyer

External Relations Specialist

**E**rna Witoelar, the former Indonesian Minister for Settlements and Regional Infrastructure, was named the first United Nations (UN) Special Ambassador for the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) for Asia and the Pacific in September 2003. UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan expressed the hope that her "talent and presence as part of the MDG Campaign will contribute to reach the hearts and minds of people around the world."

During a visit to ADB, she outlined in an interview for *ADB Review* the challenges ahead for the Millennium Campaign, launched in November 2002 to build partnerships with stakeholders to mobilize support for achieving the MDGs.



Eric Sales

**Erna Witoelar**  
UN Special Ambassador  
for the MDGs for Asia and  
the Pacific

**How does the Millennium Campaign and your work as UN Special Ambassador for the MDGs fit within the context of the UN system, and what does your work entail?**

Within the UN system there are two main supporting efforts to enable countries to reach the MDGs. One is the Millennium Project, which is helping develop the right policies to reach the goals—whether in economics, trade, or development. The other is the Millennium Campaign, which is facilitating campaigns to make sure that the process is catalyzed. Both units are directly under the Secretary General.

This is a new global solidarity momentum that must go beyond government to



help countries reach the goals and increase commitments to reduce poverty, which in turn will help in achieving the rest of the goals.

My role is to get top-level commitment and generate public awareness and pressure. I am campaigning among governments, civil society, parliaments, universities, the private sector, and all other players; meeting government poverty reduction teams and national planning boards; talking at universities; giving interviews; and appearing on talk shows.

#### What commitments are you looking for from the region's developing countries to further their MDG agenda?

As the goals are holistic and interrelated, the process of working together in partnerships at the national, regional, and global levels is very important. To achieve the MDGs, all stakeholders have to participate actively—not just governments. If we continue to conduct our development work in a business-as-usual way, many of us [developing countries] won't be able to reach the goals.

Governments need to be constantly reminded of the commitments they have already made to achieve the goals and that they should be really serious and mainstream them in existing work. But the real implementation has to happen at the local level. The better local governments are able to target and develop the right interventions, the better will be the results on poverty reduction, health, sustainable development, and education.

Many countries actually have money to reach the goals, it is just that we have not been using it in an effective way. So good governance is important, like accountability, participation, transparency, and minimizing corruption.

#### What progress have you seen in the region toward achieving the goals?

Some countries are more advanced in the MDG process than others. Some have already reached certain goals in a short period. But they have not viewed them in a holistic way that could then be used to reach the other goals.

Countries like Malaysia, for instance, have already reached many of the goals and will be able to reach all of them by 2005, except probably Goal 7 on sustainable de-

**SHARED CONCERN** The MDGs are holistic and interrelated—the process of working together at national, regional, and global levels is very important



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**“Aid is not effective if every donor has its own strategy, each accompanied by complex procedures that overburden poor countries' institutional capacity”**

velopment of the environment. In these cases, they need to go beyond the goals to develop “MDG plus.”

On Goal 3, gender and empowerment of women, the target in the Philippines is not only to eliminate gender disparity at school level but also in terms of reproductive rights, so the country can develop its own targets based on the MDGs. The better we are able to define our targets, the

faster we can reach them.

What needs to be sharpened is our capacity to benchmark and note progress. There has been little work on this in the past because many of our countries have weak statistical capacities.

**The Millennium Compact in Monterrey stated that international finance institutions (IFIs) should put the MDGs at**

**the center of their country strategies and programs. Is this happening?**

I don't think so. People know the theory, people know the concept, but it is still at the conceptual level. In theory we know that to reach the MDGs we have to be more holistic. But support from IFIs is still sectoral. So the international community needs to coordinate better among itself.

The better the partnerships between IFIs and multilateral and bilateral donors, the better will be the use of resources. We have to be able to improve the use of existing resources, loans, and grants to make them more effective.

Creditors of ADB, donors, IFIs, and the UN are increasingly reforming their programs and processes toward achieving the MDGs. But if we want to reach the goals by 2015, we all need to coordinate efforts. Aid is not effective if every donor has its own strategy, each accompanied by complex procedures that overburden poor countries' institutional capacity. We must ensure the implementation of the Rome Declaration on Harmonization.

When I was in the Government, I was very upset because ADB had its own poverty strategy, the World Bank had its own poverty strategy, and the Department for International Development of the United Kingdom had its own poverty strategy for the same country—Indonesia. We were just observers of this process. It was a case of their experts debating among themselves—*about us*. We don't have ownership of these processes. It is very important that we have ownership. They don't need to work *for us*, they have to work *with us*.

**How would you like to see ADB involving itself more in the MDG agenda?**

ADB should readjust its existing programs and existing approaches to better answer individual countries' needs in reaching the MDGs. It also needs to gradually move from direct local-level project intervention to more strengthening of national and provincial capacity to develop and really implement pro-poor policies because that is our weakness.

ADB has a lot of knowledge generated over many decades. We could make more use of this. Our national governments need to be educated on good practices. There is

a big turnover of policymakers in these countries, so there is a constant need to involve them again in understanding all this knowledge, instead of reinventing the wheel. ADB at the regional level could coordinate better with other regional players to be able to catalyze peer-to-peer learning of countries in this region.

**Have you encountered much official cynicism about achieving the MDGs?**

There is skepticism in developing countries of Asia and the Pacific that it is all just a way of packaging old stuff so that the UN, the international community, World Bank, and other IFIs can make more business for themselves.

There is also skepticism [in the developed world] that national governments in developing countries are not committed enough to the goals because they face so many distractions from internal political problems.

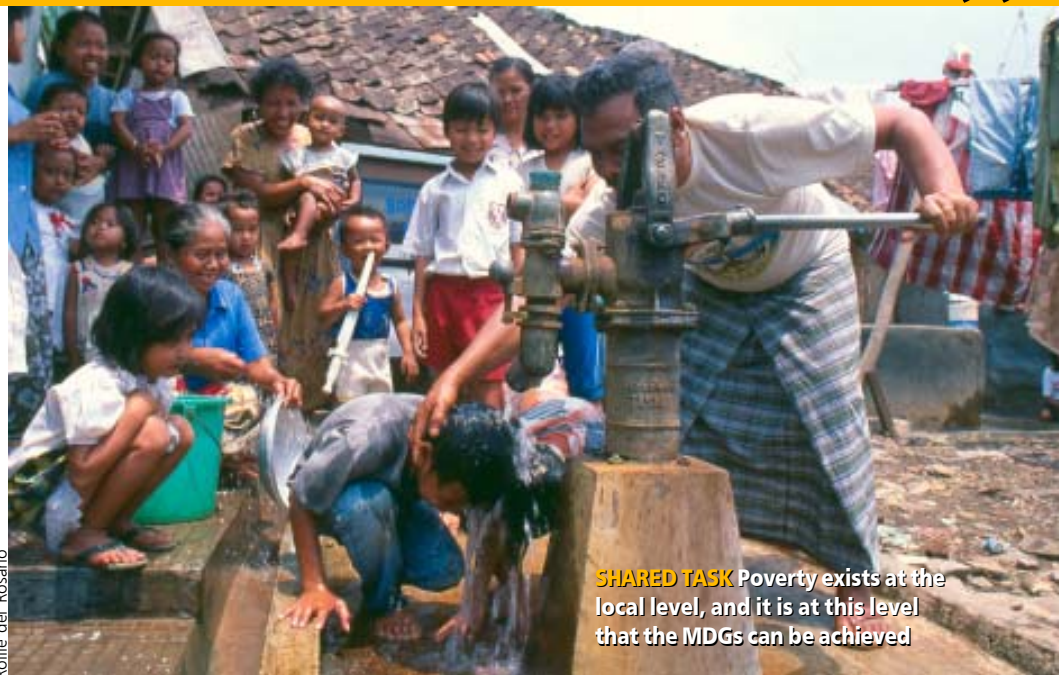
We have to stress that this is a global solidarity for a new approach to partnerships with better ways of measuring progress. Then we can move forward and each country can improve its ways of doing things to reach the goals. And even after they have reached the goals, they can move forward from there, because the goals themselves are very elementary and very basic.

**What kind of reception have you received from governments and the public in your first six months of work on the MDG issue?**

I'm pleasantly surprised to see how fast people can be "MDG-ized." As soon as people realized how the MDGs are linked with their work, concerns, campaigns, they usually become interested and enthusiastic, despite some initial skepticism. Governments' reactions vary, especially regarding the need to be more participatory in making the MDG reports. Some are quite reluctant to involve civil society from the beginning for several reasons. Some are still coordinated by the foreign ministry—maybe they don't realize that the MDGs are not just the governments' pledges to the international community, but, most important, they are an obligation to their own people.

It's amazing how little information on MDGs exist in most of the countries for ordinary people. The MDGs are so far only owned by the central governments, UN, and donor communities in the country. A lot still needs to be done to make them owned at the local level. It's at the local level that poverty exists, and it's at the local level that the MDGs can be achieved through a holistic and integrated development approach. ■

**“It was a case of their experts debating among themselves”**



**SHARED TASK** Poverty exists at the local level, and it is at this level that the MDGs can be achieved

Rollie del Rosario



# STAYING ON TRACK FOR 2015



While not new for ADB, the MDGs represent shared, measurable, and monitorable goals that DMCs are seeking to achieve in partnership with ADB

By **Bruce Purdue**

Head, Results Management Unit

**T**he Asian Development Bank (ADB) takes pride in its role in helping its developing member countries (DMCs)—and the entire Asia and Pacific region—achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by 2015. The MDGs are eight goals, supported by 18 time-bound targets and 48 measurable indicators that outline objectives for poor developing countries. They aim at measurable progress toward eradicating some key barriers of human development: poverty, hunger, disease, illiteracy, environmental degradation, and discrimination against women.

The MDGs are not “new” for ADB—there is much continuity in our work from the past. However, the MDGs do represent shared, measurable, and monitorable goals. What is clear is that ADB must be rigorous and systematic in how it addresses the MDGs in planning, formulating, implementing, and refining our country strategies and programs.

With more than 700 million people in Asia and the Pacific living on less than \$1 a day, and more than two thirds of the world’s poor living in this region, ADB faces a great responsibility to help its poorer DMCs do their best to achieve the MDGs by 2015. ADB also understands it must aim to better mainstream MDGs in policies and actions, and help build consensus on MDG priorities with our DMCs. We must also aim for better consistency in how our country strategies and programs address the MDGs.

## Global Benchmarks

ADB, with the rest of the global development community—including developing countries—endorsed the MDGs as appropriate global benchmarks for tracking the key elements of poverty reduction. Since 2002, ADB has taken steps to help its DMCs achieve the MDGs and related outcomes.

The MDGs represent a fundamentally important global consensus on the key steps that must be taken to seriously tackle poverty and its attendant evils. The willingness of ADB and DMCs to become involved in the global struggle to achieve the MDGs will increase the pressure on developed countries to play their part, particularly when it comes to trade, elimination of subsidies, and the high ideals expressed in MDG 8—the global partnership for development.

In continuing to collaborate to accelerate progress toward the MDGs, ADB is already addressing initiatives such as identifying jointly with each DMC the MDGs most relevant to its stage of development and the priority actions to be taken, in concert with other development partners.

## Core Competencies

ADB is also focusing on core competencies, such as regional cooperation and the provision of global and regional public goods. It is

working on creating stronger links between ADB programs and the MDGs and related outcomes; raising awareness within ADB to ensure that the momentum of MDG-related actions is maintained; and helping mobilize sustainable resources (including local resources) to advance the MDG agenda.

After years of debate on whether development agencies have lost their way, a collective development mission appears to have made a significant breakthrough with the MDGs.

The MDGs can provide a great opportunity to an institution, such as ADB, to have clear and concrete answers to those nagging questions on the relevance of development work and the projects that we finance.

## Good Intentions

ADB has always pursued the good intentions enshrined in its Charter, policies, and projects. However, the problem is often being able to ensure a credible check on how those good intentions are pursued. Which of the many challenges facing DMCs do we

**“The MDGs represent a fundamentally important global consensus on the key steps that must be taken to seriously tackle poverty and its attendant evils”**



Ram Cabrera

**FACING THE FUTURE** Many challenges remain for ADB to effectively support an accelerated MDG agenda

tackle? How do we know the fight against poverty is being won, and if so, how do we measure ADB's effectiveness in this? How can we go beyond repetitive statements of good intentions to factual, meaningful, and understandable evidence of real results? How do we get these important messages to our stakeholders, including our DMCs and civil society?

These are global challenges, and major questions for ADB.

However, the framework enshrined in the MDGs can provide us with the means to demonstrate our contribution to development effectiveness outcomes in plausible, concrete, and measurable ways.

Recent studies, such as the United Nations Development Programme's *Human Development Report 2003* and the report of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific on *Promoting the Millennium Development Goals in Asia and the Pacific (2003)*, highlight the need to accelerate progress toward achieving the MDGs. In other words, there is a need for a renewed commitment by development institutions to contribute to the emerging global partnership to help achieve the MDGs.

In addition to our work on country strategies and programs, ADB also continues to take steps in relation to economic and sector work, and regional initiatives to help DMCs achieve the MDGs and related outcomes. This has been combined with con-

## Millennium Development Goals: Achievable?

- Goal 1** Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger
- Goal 2** Achieve universal primary education
- Goal 3** Promote gender equality and empower women
- Goal 4** Reduce child mortality
- Goal 5** Improve maternal health
- Goal 6** Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases
- Goal 7** Ensure environmental sustainability
- Goal 8** Foster global partnership for development

tinuing efforts to support capacity building and data collection at the country level.

However, ADB still faces challenges at both country and regional levels in helping accelerate progress toward the MDGs, particularly in the case of countries identified as "top priority" and "high priority." A solution to this could be even greater focus at country level to find better linkages between ADB projects and the targets and in-

dicators reflecting the MDGs and related outcomes.

ADB has made considerable efforts to integrate the MDGs into its operations, including adopting policies and initiatives to facilitate the achievement of the MDGs. Yet, many challenges remain for us to effectively support an accelerated MDG agenda.

For example, with the adoption of the Poverty Reduction Strategy, poverty reduction became ADB's overarching goal and in 2002 ADB endorsed the MDGs as the benchmark regime for assessing progress in the key areas of poverty reduction.

One major challenge is to better articulate the likely impact of ADB's operations on that set of MDG targets that are most directly linked to ADB operations, having regard to the efforts of DMCs and other development partners.

We must analyze the linkages among the DMC's national poverty reduction strategy (or equivalent), the MDGs, and ADB's lending and nonlending interventions. In some cases, it may be possible to describe a direct link between a proposed project and MDG targets/indicators for the country. In other cases, there may be inherent problems in trying to link ADB inputs directly to MDG outcomes—especially when there are multiple players—all with important roles. Yet, this type of analysis must be tackled in collaboration with each DMC. This is essential to managing for development results.

There is much to be done in helping ADB DMCs strengthen research and diagnostic capacity to help them establish the linkages mentioned above. Without such sustainable capacity building, true MDG progress will be jeopardized.

A global review of the MDGs will take place in 2005. This assessment of progress will help create a clearer vision of how ADB must continue to meet the challenges in the following decade to push forward progress toward achieving the MDGs. While we may have already reached some success, we need to identify additional ways for ADB's efforts to link into achieving the MDGs.

We cannot afford to be complacent.

With this drive for demonstrating results and our ongoing commitment to poverty reduction, ADB is well placed to continue its role as a valuable global partner in helping DMCs achieve the MDGs by 2015. ■

# A BLACK AND WHITE ISSUE

Corruption in Asia and the Pacific is often obscured by a haze of secrecy and is difficult to measure. Evidence suggests it is widespread and a direct challenge to meeting the MDGs by diverting funds meant for education, health care, and infrastructure that could help lower poverty

By **Eric Van Zant**  
Consultant Writer

**D**eciding what is corruption is more art than science: many people may find it difficult to define it exactly, but they know it when they see it.

Graft, fraud, nepotism, and bribery have been around for an eternity. In individual cases they can even appear to be beneficial. Far from suggesting smooth operation, however, widespread corruption is a symptom of malfunction that can hinder foreign investment and restrict development.

“Rampant corruption demonstrates that the system is broken—resources are not going where they should go,” says Michael Stevens, ADB Principal Audit Specialist, Office of the Auditor General.

It is estimated that one third of public investment in many Asia and Pacific countries is squandered on corruption. Keeping in mind the difficulty of measurement, ADB officials suggest it can cost as much as one sixth of a country’s potential gross domestic product.

In a new study, the World Bank Institute estimates more than \$1 trillion is paid in bribes each year. Daniel Kaufmann, the Institute’s director for governance, says the figure estimates bribes paid worldwide in both rich and developing countries. It does not include embezzlement of public funds or theft of public assets.

The issue goes to the heart of the Mil-

lennium Development Goals. Because corruption robs funds from programs to improve health, education, and other basic services, the poor too often pay the price. The World Bank Institute estimates that child mortality can fall as much as 75% when countries tackle corruption and improve their rule of law.

“While one may think of examples in which some firms/people are made better off by paying a bribe... the overall effect of corruption on economic development is negative. This is just as true in Asia as elsewhere,” writes Shang-Jen Wei, the Harvard-based economist in a study of corruption published in 1998.

## Reducing Harm

Reducing corruption to less damaging levels is difficult and can take a long time. It requires leadership, the setting up of independent watchdogs, establishment of policies and laws that are adhered to, and public sector reform.

“You will need many generations to deal with the problem. Things are bad, and some are saying ‘getting worse,’” says Jak Jabes,

**HEAVY BURDEN** The poor too often pay the price of corruption



**More than \$1 trillion is paid in bribes each year**

World Bank Institute estimate

Director of ADB’s Governance and Regional Cooperation Division. Just how long it takes, he says, will depend on setting up an “environment for change.”

The ADB-Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Anticorruption Initiative, started in 1999 in response to the turmoil set off by the Asian financial crisis, is helping set a tone for change. Under this initiative, 21 coun-



tries have signed the Anticorruption Action Plan, including Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, and Philippines. The four are ranked among the region's most corrupt nations by numerous surveys, including by Transparency International.

The ADB-OECD initiative aims to help build institutions and implement anticorruption strategies without interfering in internal corruption cases. It promotes an integrated approach to policymaking while respecting country differences, encourages partnerships between governments and civil society, and promotes international aid coordination.

### Where Corruption Stands

Corruption in parts of Asia is rampant. Measuring corruption, however, is difficult due to the surrounding secrecy.

Serious study suggests, nonetheless, that it can be assessed, if not fully quantified. To make it easier researchers use surveys that gauge expert opinion, sometimes that of businesspeople. It is their perception that matters, because they will decide where to invest their money in the region.

Transparency International, an international nongovernment organization that brings civil society, business, and governments together to combat corruption, provides respected assessments of corruption around the world. Through its International Secretariat and more than 85 national chapters, Transparency International works to raise awareness of the damaging effects of corruption, advocates policy reform, works toward the implementation of multilateral conventions, and monitors compliance by governments, corporations, and banks.

Its last perceptions index ranked Singapore the fifth least corrupt country in its list of 133. Hong Kong, China, was 14<sup>th</sup>, and Malaysia 37<sup>th</sup>. Bangladesh was last, tailing Nigeria.

Most Asian countries were in the bottom half of the index.

The need for measurement, however, can be taken too far. "It does not matter what specific percent or level someone has measured. The more important issue is whether there relatively is a little or a lot," says Mr. Stevens.

In Malaysia, corruption foes are increasingly hopeful the new Prime Minister, Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, will keep his pledge to crack down on corruption. His

government, a signatory to the ADB-OECD plan, has charged a minister and a prominent businessman with graft. It has also brandished a list of 18 other high-ranking officials who could face similar charges.

"Political will is absolutely essential. If you have strong leadership, then people will follow," says Mr. Stevens.

More and more Asian governments are acknowledging that fighting graft and bribery is fundamental to the fight against poverty. Hong Kong, China, and Singapore—once among the most corrupt—turned around rapidly once the political will emerged to do so. By using measures such as raising civil service salaries to levels that would discourage corruption—and with strong anticorruption bodies such as Hong Kong, China's Independent Commission Against Corruption—corruption cleaned up. Singapore's corruption watchdog is the Corrupt Practices Investigation Bureau.

Abuse of power for personal benefit will likely always exist. Recent high-profile cases of corruption in Canada and the United States show it is not just developing countries that suffer from the problem, nor is it culturally specific.

"We won't fool ourselves into thinking we will get rid of it completely. It is everywhere," says Mr. Stevens.

The question becomes one of how to work in a system where it is widespread, and how to reduce it.

### How ADB Deals with Corruption

"People ask: why are you working with notoriously corrupt countries? By engaging with a country and providing a loan or technical assistance we have the opportunity for policy dialogue and to bring the issue of corruption to the forefront of our discussion and maintain dialogue on the issue," says Mr. Jabes.

ADB is helping countries set up corruption watchdogs, such as in Bangladesh and Indonesia. In Nepal, ADB assisted in setting up the National Vigilance Center. Through a \$600,000 technical assistance loan, the center is supporting the development of technical auditing capacity within the Government and the private sector,

which will provide improved quality control of civil works in infrastructure projects.

ADB is supporting reforms to strengthen the Philippines' nonbank financial sector through a \$150 million loan program approved in September 2003. It will address graft and corruption in the financial markets, improve transparency, and strengthen investor protection.

Corruption distorts development by directing funds away from their intended purpose. Studies have shown that domestic investment, foreign investment, and economic growth are lower in more corrupt countries. While it may appear to "grease the wheels" for some, corruption only indicates the system has derailed. Acknowledging and fighting it are central to economic growth. ■



Richie Abrina

**“ Rampant corruption demonstrates that the system is broken—resources are not going where they should go ”**

Michael Stevens, ADB Principal Audit Specialist

## MDGs

- 1 Poverty and Hunger
- 2 Education
- 3 Gender Equality
- 4 Child Mortality
- 5 Maternal Health
- 6 HIV/AIDS
- 7 Environment
- 8 Global Partnership

# MEETING THE CHALLENGE

The Millennium Declaration calls for a joint effort by nations to refocus their priorities to achieve significant changes by 2015—it is a daunting task that presents many challenges

By **Kamal Ahmad**

Counsel, Law and Policy Reform Unit,  
Office of the General Counsel

**W**hen 147 countries became signatories to the Millennium Declaration, they entered into a social contract with one another—but the Declaration is no ordinary contract. Though not legally binding, it constitutes “soft law,” a moral imperative for the signatories to act on the promises they made to help refocus global attention, energy, and resources to reduce by 2015—or, in some cases, 2020—the suffering of nearly 2 billion people who are affected by malnutrition, disease, and premature death. Of course, grinding poverty has withstood the grand eloquence of past declarations. In 1974, for instance, Henry Kissinger, then the United States’ Secretary of State, famously declared that by 1984 no child, woman, or man would ever go to bed hungry. Three decades later, Kissinger’s promise remains grossly unfulfilled. At the same time history also demonstrates that when the world has united in addressing a particular scourge, it can succeed in eliminating it altogether as the cases of smallpox and polio eradication show.

The Declaration, while echoing past promises and commitments, is unprecedented in its nature, scope, and specificity. Its eight objectives have measurable outcomes, time lines for achievements, and clear indicators for monitoring progress.

The Declaration calls for changes in the norms that govern societies: it calls for a fundamental reorientation of legal and

institutional arrangements and priorities at national and global levels.

## New, Better Opportunities

To fulfill the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the poor must find new and better opportunities for their livelihoods. Provision of basic social services, such as health care, water and sanitation, and education must also be expanded and improved. Economic growth must enable the poor to engage in the process and benefit from it without devouring the natural resource endowments on which the prospects of our future generations depend.

An effective legal framework for the accountability of public institutions and a capacity of citizens to assert their legal rights are minimum requirements for the sustainability of the MDGs. Public institutions must have the capacity to deliver appropriate services and assist people in identifying their needs and priorities.

Poor governance, corruption, and lack of accountability forestall development. Legal and institutional reforms will help create conditions for active citizenship so the poor have access to information to enable them to understand and secure their rights.

By increasing accountability, public institutions will become more transparent in their operations, enabling citizens to understand how resources are used and decisions made, and providing clearer avenues for grievance resolution. Active citizenship implies a legal framework that enables citizens to effectively articulate their views.

## Guarding Against Abuse

The state must address insecurity and



**TRAPPED** Landless sharecroppers are often caught in a vicious cycle that robs them of their liberty

vulnerability of its citizens, especially the poor, by using its monopoly over the security apparatus. It must guard against abuse of power by state functionaries, and strengthen law and order while making the police and judiciary more accountable.

ADB is playing a role in this through, for example, its assistance to Pakistan’s Access to Justice Program, which supports an increase in budgetary expenditure on the police and judiciary while seeking more transparency in accountability of these institutions.

In 2000, an ADB-commissioned study examined how legal empowerment contributes to good governance, poverty reduction, and other MDGs. It showed that legal empowerment increases the ability of the poor to play a more informed role in local decision making to advance their rights and interests. It also showed that the heightened public interest and expectations that can result from legal empowerment can have a catalytic impact in goading public institutions to be more responsive and accountable to the needs and rights of the poor.

ADB studies have confirmed that gender disparities are acute in Asia. Legal and constitutional safeguards against discrimination, while not guaranteeing protection, can be a significant first step toward reform.

Already, India and Pakistan have set





Ram Cabrera

## While the MDGs are universal, no single approach is likely to be effective everywhere

aside reserved seats for women in national and local governments. Bangladesh is also contemplating reintroducing such a measure for elections to the national parliament. Afghanistan's new constitution envisages the reservation of seats for women.

Most of Asia's poor depend on agriculture for their livelihood. Access to land and landownership is critical to the economic empowerment of the rural poor. Without such access, the rural poor have difficulty gaining credit at reasonable terms. An example of the consequences of this can be seen in the case of bonded laborers in Pakistan, in the province of Sindh, where landless sharecroppers are caught in a vicious cycle that robs them of their liberty.

### Raising Awareness

ADB assistance to the Government of Pakistan through a loan for the Sindh Rural Development Project is helping address the plight of bonded laborers by, among others, raising legal awareness and independent transaction monitoring of debts that ultimately forces a laborer into a bonded state. In Cambodia, much of the nation's

land remains unregistered, rendering it unavailable as collateral for obtaining credit. ADB has been collaborating with the Government of Cambodia to establish a legal system with respect to landownership and land rights, including access to credit by mortgaging land.

ADB research has pioneered an integrated approach to insolvency and secured transaction law reform to ensure that insolvency reforms support secured lending and contribute to a more predictable debtor-creditor legal regime.

While changes in a nation's domestic policies, laws, and institutional norms are crucial, changes in the global framework are also necessary. Trade and nontrade barriers, particularly concerning agricultural products, still challenge many developing countries trying to break into the consumer markets of high-income countries. Although tariff structures are often favorable to developing countries, particularly under preferential access arrangements, such as the Generalized System of Preferences and the European Union's Everything but Arms initiative, tariffs for some products escalate

at certain quota volumes.

Often the products affected are those over which low- and middle-income countries have a comparative advantage, such as textiles. For example, Bangladesh's main export is ready-made garments. The industry employs almost two million women for whom there are limited alternative livelihood opportunities. The tariff charged by the United States on Bangladesh's \$2 billion of mostly textile exports is higher than the tariff charged to France for its \$30 billion of exports. An international trade regime supportive of the MDGs ought to eliminate such distortions of trade.

While the MDGs are universal, no single approach is likely to be effective everywhere. Each country must develop its own framework for catalyzing diverse local processes that will ultimately yield the best results. The MDGs call for global priorities to be aligned in a way that can dramatically reduce the deprivation suffered by poor people. However, the goals can only be achieved and sustained when the policies, laws, and institutions implicated in this effort are also aligned to meet this challenge. Without such a holistic approach, risk exists that targets set by the Millennium Declaration may be met without addressing the structural issues that ultimately will determine the durability of such success. Here the stakes are indeed high. ■

# MDGs

- 1 Poverty and Hunger
- 2 Education
- 3 Gender Equality
- 4 Child Mortality
- 5 Maternal Health
- 6 HIV/AIDS
- 7 Environment
- 8 Global Partnership

By Lisa Studdert

Health Specialist

**I**ron deficiency is the most common of all nutritional deficiencies. It impairs the mental development of up to 60% of children aged 6–24 months in the developing world.

Severe iron deficiency causes the deaths of an estimated 50,000 women in pregnancy and childbirth each year. It is estimated that in severely affected areas, the subsequent loss of productivity in the workforce through iron deficiency may account for a loss of up to 2% of gross domestic product (GDP) in the worst-affected countries.

Among ADB's developing member countries, an estimated 22,000 women die in India each year because of severe anemia during childbirth. In Afghanistan, 65% of children under the age of five are severely iron deficient. In the Philippines, more

than 35% of women aged 15–49 are iron deficient, and more than 500 die during pregnancy and childbirth each year as a result, according to the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) in 2004.

For many years, governments and public health nutrition specialists—from donor organizations to community health clinics—have struggled to find effective and sustainable ways to address this pervasive problem. Iron tablets are a possible solution but require an ongoing supply and can cause uncomfortable (but harmless) side effects.

In the long term, ensuring adequate iron intake through food is seen as the best solution. In most populations, the best sources of iron in the food supply are meat products, but these are relatively expensive and thus rarely consumed by the poor.

But imagine if the rice so extensively eaten by the poor across Asia was naturally bred and selected for high iron content.

### Rice to the Rescue

To many researchers and health specialists, this has been a long dreamed of development in fighting micronutrient deficiencies—and now ADB's support to a global effort to improve the nutrient quality of rice is helping make this a reality.

In collaboration with the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) and the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI), ADB has supported the work of plant breeders at IRRI to identify rice crop varieties that have a naturally occurring high level of iron and to selectively breed these to enhance that iron content while also maintaining crop productivity and consumer acceptance. The latter is important to ensure that any newly developed varieties maintain farmers' incomes; otherwise, farmers cannot be expected to adopt and grow the new varieties for the benefit of consumers.

After screening more than 1,600 varieties

Trials to gauge the effectiveness of boosting the iron content of rice are showing encouraging results that could drastically decrease micronutrient deficiencies

# RICE POWER



**SUPPER FOR SCIENCE** 300 religious sisters in 11 convents around Manila are taking part in a trial to determine the health benefits of a new strain of iron-enriched rice

Lingkod Sayo/IRRI



ies, a new strain (IR68144) was developed that had an iron content of 10 parts per million. This is approximately four to five times more iron (after processing and cooking) than most varieties currently consumed in the Philippines. But does this translate into improved iron status in the consumer?

### Clues in Convent Trial

To test this, a trial was planned with more than 300 religious sisters in 11 convents around Manila. With her full agreement, each sister was randomly assigned to receive either regular (low iron) rice or the new high-iron variety. The sisters and the research team were not told what they were receiving during the trial. The sisters represented an ideal population for such a study because their food is cooked in a common kitchen and consumed in a common dining room, so the distribution and consumption of different rice varieties can be carefully monitored.

The sisters' iron status as indicated by hemoglobin and other biochemical indicators of iron status was measured before the trial began, halfway (4.5 months), and at the conclusion (9 months). Women remaining—or newly—iron-deficient at the end of the trial were given iron supplements to ensure this deficiency was quickly corrected.

The trial concluded in September 2003 and, so far, the analysis of data indicate the results have been positive. Among the women who were iron-deficient but not yet anemic at the start of the trial, total body iron reserves improved significantly. The women who consumed the high-iron rice ingested about 20% more iron per day than those who consumed the regular rice. The same women who consumed the high-iron rice on average also increased their body iron by 10%, while the women consuming control rice actually lost 6% of their body iron. The greatest increases in body iron were seen in the women who consumed the most iron from biofortified rice.

These are preliminary results and analysis is ongoing. The research team is preparing papers for submission to scientific journals and results will be presented at conferences for discussion and deliberation. Most importantly though—for ADB, IFPRI, and IRRI—they indicate that there is good reason to keep pursuing this work.

**POOR DIET** In India alone, an estimated 22,000 women die each year as a result of severe anemia during childbirth



**The same women who consumed the high-iron rice on average also increased their body iron by 10%**

The next step is to conduct trials on the effect and use of high-iron rice in a community setting and look at the effect on children's iron status. A study is planned in Bangladesh in 2004–2005.

ADB's involvement in this work started in 2000 under the leadership of Joseph Hunt, ADB Senior Health and Nutrition Specialist (now retired). Due to ADB's commitment to the concept of biofortified crops for improving the nutritional status of the poor, there have been significant developments in the field.

In October 2003, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation committed \$25 million to IFPRI's HarvestPlus program that will work to develop crops with enhanced nutrient status: not just with iron but also with vitamin A and zinc and in other key staple crops on which the poor around the world depend (wheat, maize, beans, cassava, and sweet potato).

Improving iron status in Asia's poor populations will directly serve global efforts to meet the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) 5 on improving maternal health and contribute to achiev-

ing the MDG Goal 4 on reducing child mortality. For sustained, effective solutions, a continuing, concerted effort is required from a diverse range of people including plant breeders, nutritionists, multidisciplinary research teams, donors, and affected communities.

The prospect of helping children reach their full intellectual potential and women survive the most basic and important process of childbirth makes this effort more than worthwhile. ■

# MDGs

**1** Poverty and Hunger

**4** Child Mortality

**5** Maternal Health

**8** Global Partnership

## Learning innovative ways to manage their environment has created new opportunities for poor rural dwellers in Fujian Province in the People's Republic of China

By KyeongAe Choe and Carolyn Dedolph

Senior Project Specialist, and External Relations Specialist

Every time it rained, the farmers of Shi Gu Town in Yongchun County, Fujian Province in the People's Republic of China (PRC), would watch the sandy soil—and their livelihoods—wash down the denuded hillsides. They had difficulty eking a living out of their sloping fields, which had suffered from years of poor cropping practices.

In 1996, the average annual household income in the village was yuan (CNY) 1,800 (\$220), with a third of the households earning less than CNY1,000 (\$120). However, a fast-growing variety of bamboo (*Dendocalamus latiflorus*) has changed their lives for the better. Known for its bountiful shoot production, Ma bamboo has nearly stopped the severe soil erosion and more than doubled farmers' incomes.

Ma bamboo, which grows to about 13 meters, has many uses: its young shoots can be eaten fresh or be canned, its stems are processed into incense sticks and bamboo baskets, and its leaves are used as wrappers. By the third year, 15–20 kilograms (kg) of young shoots and 30 kg of poles may be harvested from every clump.

"Bamboo is more profitable than other crops," says farmer Gao Wen Xi as he cuts grass for green manure. Within two years of planting the bamboo, he was selling the shoots to a nearby canning facility and the stems (poles) to a local pulp mill.

He has invested some of his earnings from the bamboo into rice, pigs, and an orange orchard, increasing his family's total income by CNY7,000–8,000 (\$845–970) a year. He and his wife have also used the money to build a house and pay for their two children's education.

### FAST GROWER

Ma bamboo is considered one of Yongchun County's six major industries



# A TIME FOR CHANGE

Carolyn Dedolph



### Social Spin-Offs

About 27 million of Fujian Province's 34 million people live in rural areas where the terrain ranges from mountainous to hilly to coastal. Arable land is limited, and whatever suitable land is available is intensively cultivated, causing soil degradation and erosion. Since the start of economic reforms in 1978, economic growth in Fujian has been largely concentrated in urban areas, increasing the rural-urban gap.

The Fujian Soil Conservation and Rural Development Project, with a \$65 million loan from ADB and a \$406,000 grant from the Japan Special Fund, began in 1995 and was completed in 2001. Its main objective was to promote sustainable growth in the rural economy in ways that benefited the poorest people.

**“Our goal is to serve the people and alleviate poverty among our farmers”**  
Lin Kai Wang, Project Director and Senior Agronomist

The project's five components were linked by the common objective of promoting soil conservation and rural development. Farmers in degraded areas learned to develop orchards using conservation-effective measures; fishers in coastal areas learned aquaculture techniques.

### The Right Choices

The soil and water conservation interventions focused on income-earning activities for the farmers, because experience showed that activities linked to farm income would succeed. Farmers were encouraged to select the option best for their situation.

Agro-processing industries and agriculture market development linked agriculture sector production activities with processing and market distribution, promoting a market cycle of primary produce and off-farm employment opportunities. Small hydropower development provided the rural poor with electricity and a substitute for firewood, subsequently protecting the forests as a measure of soil conservation. The project area covers small watersheds across 30 counties along the densely populated eastern coastline.

On average, real per capita household income almost doubled from CNY1,335 (\$290) (in 2003 current prices) before the project to CNY2,410 (\$845) at completion.

Income generated by the project exceeded the expected income by 20% (CNY6,928 [\$835] annually per family in 1995 constant prices). Of the 64,000 or so participating rural households, 35% were below the poverty line in 1995; at completion, most had been lifted out of poverty.

Local government support was important in obtaining loans for private investors from local banks. A risk-sharing mechanism among the village farmers engaged in orchard development with good performing agro-business enterprises was one of the key factors for strong partnership and success. Providing innovative small shareholding opportunities and technical and management support from private business partners were also instrumental in helping achieve the highly successful

outcome of the project. Risk sharing through direct participation,

partnership, and government cooperation with the private sector in initiating rural investments—and the eventual phaseout of government interests in private enterprise after the enterprise had fully developed—provided a strong foundation for mutual trust and confidence among private and public investors.

### Enterprise Reform

All the public enterprises involved underwent ownership restructuring, with government ownership gradually decreasing below 49%. The Vice Chairman of the Fujian Provincial People's Congress, Mr. Cao Degang, says that although it is the Government's job to provide an enabling environment for the people, the people themselves had worked hard to achieve results.

Economic reforms encouraged the establishment of the Rural Economic Cooperative, which allowed towns and villages to engage in productive economic activities (collective farming, agro-processing, and rural industries) as a unit to collect and generate revenue.

With the project creating the funding necessary for change and developing an enabling environment, the poor rural dwellers of Fujian Province have been able to turn their lives around, and make the most of their harsh environment.

### Impressive Outcome

According to PRC official estimates, between 1998 and 2001 the soil conservation and agriculture development component of orchards, tea gardens, and bamboo plantations produced 40,000 tons of fruit, 8,000 tons of tea, and 50,000 tons of bamboo shoots totaling CNY1,120 million (\$135 million).

About 5,800 ha of new orchards were developed and 11,573 ha of existing orchards rehabilitated (*see story, p. 16*). In the aquaculture component, about 90,000 tons of aquatic products were produced worth CNY1,200 million (\$145 million) (*see story, p. 17*). Seven agro-processing facilities generated more than CNY80 million (\$9.6 million) in sales revenues and provided about 700 permanent and 30,000 seasonal jobs. More than 19,000 training courses on contour terracing, fruit variety selection, soil conservation, and orchard management were conducted.

According to Fujian Vice-Governor Qiu Guang Zhong and provincial officials, the Fujian project was successful because it had strong commitment from the Government to make it work and ensure the agriculture, finance, and planning agencies worked together at all levels. The project was driven by the Agriculture Bureau, which had the staff and technical expertise to deliver new technologies and follow up with farmers.

“Our goal is to serve the people and alleviate poverty among our farmers,” says Lin Kai Wang, Project Director and Senior Agronomist. Building on skills that were already available, the officials looked closely at the markets and capacity to repay the loan. They also made sure that the investments were appropriately sized.

The success of the project was distinguished in yet another way: it was the first ADB agriculture project to receive a highly successful rating in the project completion report. ■

# MDGs

**1** Poverty and Hunger

**7** Environment

**8** Global Partnership



Carolyn Dedolph

### Struggle in Orchards

In 1991, 40 farm households were encouraged to develop the Heliukang Orchard by planting longan and other fruit trees on about 10 hectares (ha) of hilly, denuded land. But it was a struggle. Four years later, the farmers' incomes were still low.

Techniques to cultivate cash crops on sloping lands were not available. In 1996, the fruit farm was provided with a \$410,505 loan through the Fujian Soil Conservation and Rural Development Project. The loan was used to support the Fujian Soil and Water Conservation Center in its work to disseminate appropriate technologies.

An experienced fruit farm manager was elected to run the orchard, fast-growing longan varieties were planted, and scientific principles implemented, such as applying green manure for fertilizer. Farmers also received individual loans.

The farmers were trained in production and management technologies, with experts giving lectures on fruit farming and soil conservation techniques.

Full production started in 2001, with 2,400 trees in the Heliukang Orchard yielding an estimated 34 tons of longan valued at CNY202,250 (\$24,450). Half the income goes to the farmers, and the rest is spent on operating the farm. With the trees now producing fruit, the farmers will start repaying their individual loans, typically at an annual rate of about CNY500 (\$60).

### Budding Prosperity

Although Chen Guo Hua never resorted to selling his blood, he is pleased with his larger income from the orchard and his other enterprises: rice, watermelon, and pigs. "Before this was wasteland," he says as he cuts grass to make organic manure. "The soil would wash down the hills and hurt the rice land."

Thanks to the orchard, the village is beginning to flourish. New houses are being built, and farmers have been diversifying into other crops and livestock. By raising funds through farmers' donations to match government funds, a paved road is being laid to the village from the highway. It will give residents year-round, all-weather access to the main roads—and markets for their fruit and other produce. Most importantly, farmers have found a means to earn a living without having to sell their blood. ■

# Fruit A New Lifeline

Farmers no longer need to sell their blood to send their children to school

By Carolyn Dedolph  
External Relations Specialist

Until a few years ago, private blood collectors in the People's Republic of China would go from one rural village to another—and poor farmers would roll up their sleeves. The blood collectors, however, spread more than money around the countryside during the 1980s and 1990s.

Because of their lax sanitary procedures, unsuspecting donors were sometimes infected with hepatitis, syphilis, HIV/AIDS, and other diseases. When blood selling was

banned in 1997, many farmers were again left with few livelihood options.

Tu Xing was one of these blood-selling villages. Of the 1,300 people who live there, 100 or so sold blood to supplement their meager farm income of about yuan (CNY) 500 (\$60) per household in 1990.

Farmer Chen Zong Yu would sell his blood twice a month to pay for his children's education. The going price then was CNY200 (\$24) for 400cc. Fortunately, those days are gone forever. "Trees are a better way to earn a living," he says, referring to his small plot of longan trees, which produce a small pulpy fruit similar to litchis.



# Seaweed: A Chilling Tale

Cold storage brings more jobs for women, better prices for kelp, and new opportunities

By Carolyn Dedolp

External Relations Specialist

**F**or as far as the eye can see, beds of lanky green kelp dot the sea in tidy rows outside the village of An Kai on the Huangqi Peninsula in southeastern People's Republic of China (PRC). For ages, farmers here have pulled kelp from the water in April and May and set it out in the sun to dry. Then they would hope it would not rain. With mildew and rot typically claiming 20–30% of every harvest, producers must sell the kelp as quickly as possible, typically at low prices.

Fisher Li Shao Xiong says he wishes for better times for the people of An Kai: “If we had a kelp processing plant here, we would get better prices and more women would have jobs.”

About 50 kilometers away is the village of Guan Wu where, until a few years ago, nearly half of its people lived below the poverty line. But a cold storage facility for kelp has dramatically changed life in Guan Wu.

When Lin Zhe Long returned to his home village in 1984 after serving in the army, he saw Guan Wu's situation all too clearly. “We were using very old techniques for kelp culture. We needed new technologies—otherwise our incomes would never increase,” says Mr. Lin, who is now General Manager of Guan Wu Seafoods Development Co. (Ltd).

## Simple Solution

In 1995, the Guan Wu village committee built a simple salted kelp processing plant and established the community-owned Guan Wu Seafoods. In 1997, the company received a yuan (CNY) 7.3 million (\$882,000) loan from ADB through the Fujian Soil Conservation and Rural Development Project. Within a year, the community had used the loan to build a cold storage facility that allows year-round kelp processing, generating more employment opportunities and better market prices.

The company has established a nursery to produce kelp seedlings for the sea farmers, and hatcheries have been built for high-value seafood such as abalone, sea urchin, grouper, flounder, and other rare fish.

More than 900 households in Guan Wu and adjacent villages are benefiting from the facility. Nearly all the households sell kelp, now at prices 25–30% more than before. In the peak season, the facility provides 700–800 jobs, mainly for women. Even in the off-season, the factory provides 150–200 employment opportunities.

“Life is much better now than before,” says Mr. Lin proudly.

## Rise in Consumerism

In the past few years, the village committee used more than CNY1.5 million (\$181,000) from the company's profits to improve public welfare by constructing

Richie Abrina



**PRODUCTION PUSH** A kelp processing plant and cold storage facility in Guan Wu enables year-round processing, higher market prices, and more jobs

roads, building sewage treatment facilities, and planting trees. The community has also established a foundation that sponsors scholarships for young people to pursue advanced studies.

“There is a Chinese saying, ‘Leave no one behind.’ We want everyone in our village to prosper,” says General Manager Lin. His vision seems to be coming true. ■



**WAYS OF OLD** People in the village of An Kai follow traditional aquaculture practices

# MDGs

- 1 Poverty and Hunger
- 6 HIV/AIDS
- 7 Environment
- 8 Global Partnership

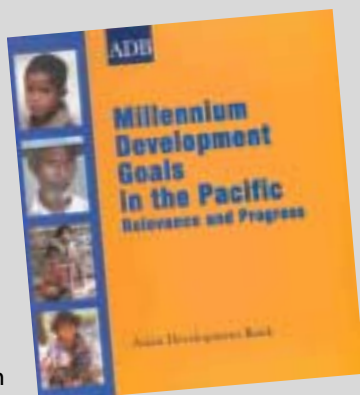
# New Publications

## PACIFIC

### Millennium Development Goals in the Pacific: Relevance and Progress

Publication Stock No. 020303

At the Monterrey Conference in March 2002, multilateral development banks, including the ADB, reached a consensus to relate their long-term strategic frameworks to the Millennium Development Goals and to examine how the MDGs could be reflected in country strategies and programs. This report presents ADB's first steps in this direction for its Pacific developing member countries.



### Swimming Against the Tide? An Assessment of the Private Sector in the Pacific

ISBN 971-561-534-1

Price: \$10 (paperback)

A robust and vibrant private sector is vital to the Pacific region's long-term economic growth and improved quality of life and is a necessary condition for sustained poverty reduction. This publication identifies many issues facing the private sector in ADB's Pacific DMCs.



### While Stocks Last The Live Reef Food Fish Trade

ISBN 971-561-498-1

Price: \$10 (paperback)

This book provides scientific evidence for the need to curb and manage the capture of wild live reef food fish, and proposes ways to help entrepreneurs and fishers reform the trade based on limiting fish capture and hatchery rearing the fish.



### Asian Development Bank Annual Report 2003

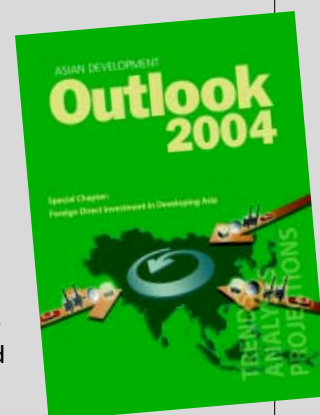
With the strong support of ADB, the Asia and Pacific region has continued its progress toward achieving the Millennium Development Goals by 2015. Overall poverty rates in the region have fallen, and growth has continued. Many of ADB's members have made investments in health and nutrition, which have reduced maternal and child mortality rates and lowered the incidence of communicable diseases.

### Asian Development Outlook

ISSN 0117-0481

Price: \$36 (paperback)

ADO 2004 asserts that the Asia and Pacific region continued to be the most dynamic region in the world in 2003, growing at 6.3%. Despite uncertainties generated by the Iraq conflict, high oil prices, SARS, and a slow recovery in major industrial countries, the region's developing economies generally showed remarkable resilience. Intraregional trade and strong consumer demand will define the outlook for developing Asia in 2004–2005. The ADO 2004 includes a chapter on foreign direct investment in developing Asia.



### Greater Mekong Subregion Atlas

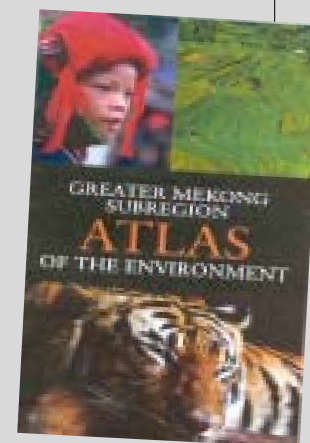
Greater Mekong Subregion Atlas of the Environment

ISBN 971-561-499-X

Price: \$40 (paperback)

\$60 (hardback)

The Greater Mekong Subregion Atlas of the Environment champions the environment of a unique part of Asia, an area straddled by rivers great and small, with bountiful watersheds, wetlands, and forests. The Atlas captures for the first time in one volume maps, remote sensing images, and essential information on one of the most culturally, ethnically, and above all, biologically diverse regions in the world.



For these and other publications,  
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<http://www.adb.org/Publications>

# MDG Update: Now Online

Comprehensive web site features ADB's MDG initiatives

By Cathy P. Reyes-Angus

Assistant Web Administrator

**T**he Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) may be an ambitious agenda for reducing poverty and improving lives, but ADB is steadfast in its commitment to achieving these goals at the regional and global levels.

In October 2003, ADB launched its MDG web site. After extensive research, the team led by Bruce Purdue, Head, and Josie Balane, Senior Results Management Officer, Results Management Unit, ADB Strategy and Policy Department, developed a more in-depth web site that will help users understand how ADB assists its developing member countries (DMCs) in achieving the MDGs.

Dedicated to its vision of a region free of poverty, ADB strongly supports the MDGs that define specific goals and targets for measuring and monitoring progress toward poverty reduction.

The web site highlights ADB's MDG initiatives.

- **Mainstreaming MDGs in country strategy and programs.** Consistent with ADB's strategy, the MDGs are increasingly reflected in the country strategy and program and poverty partnership agreement that ADB signs with each DMC.
- **Building capacity to measure and monitor the MDGs.** ADB is developing statistical databases on poverty and MDGs in the Asia and Pacific region, which are more detailed and comparable. *Key Indicators of Developing Asia and the Pacific* has become one of ADB's main initiatives in monitoring and assessing the progress toward achieving the targets set under the MDGs in its DMCs.
- **Helping achieve better results through regional cooperation.** Regional cooperation is a core component of ADB's strategy for reducing poverty in the Asia and Pacific region. This reflects the need to support the development of DMCs through cooperation to give more options by providing greater

access to resources and markets, address shared problems that stretch across borders, and avail of opportunities for sharing knowledge and information.

- **Assisting in mobilizing resources effectively.** In line with the emerging global partnership agenda to support the MDGs, ADB will work closely with other development partners to complement and build on one another's strengths. ADB is determined to play a meaningful role in this emerging global partnership.
- **Conducting research and other policy analyses.** ADB invests in generating research and knowledge products. These products are developed by many departments and offices, particularly the Economics and Research Department, Regional and Sustainable Development Department, Regional Economic Monitoring Unit, and ADB Institute.

The site has information on more recent ADB research on the MDGs, and users can find out how ADB's operational policies and strategies relating to specific sectors and themes enhance its contributions to the MDGs.

The web site also features Frequently Asked Questions on the MDGs, latest news and events, speeches and presentations by ADB Management and staff, and other related and useful links.

Through the MDG site, ADB reaffirms its support for achieving the eight goals. ■

To learn more about the MDGs and ADB, visit <http://www.adb.org/MDGs/>



## NEWS FOR NGOS

### Workshop Explores NGO-Private Sector Partnerships Against Poverty

Thirty representatives from NGOs, the private sector, governments, and bilateral and multilateral development agencies met in Thailand on 28–31 March 2004, to discuss antipoverty partnerships between NGOs and the private sector in Asia and the Pacific. The workshop, sponsored by ADB in cooperation with GlaxoSmithKline Biologicals and the Population and Community Development Association, was organized to review case studies provided by participants, explore how donor organizations can facilitate partnerships, and consider options for future cooperation between NGOs and businesses. For more information, contact Grant Curtis at [gcurtis@adb.org](mailto:gcurtis@adb.org). ■

### ADB Builds NGO Capacity

Staff of 20 NGOs from around Asia and the Pacific attended a training workshop on participating in ADB-assisted activities, 16–19 March 2004. Hosted by the International Institute of Rural Reconstruction in Cavite, Philippines, the workshop improved understanding among NGO representatives of how ADB operates. The workshop was one of several recent initiatives being undertaken to implement *ADB-Government-NGO Cooperation: A Framework for Action, 2003–2005*. For more information, contact Suzanne Nazal at [ngocoordinator@adb.org](mailto:ngocoordinator@adb.org). ■

### Civil Society Consulted on ADF Replenishment

Negotiations on the next replenishment of the Asian Development Fund, ADF IX, have been under way since October 2003. In January and February 2004, four workshops were held to solicit the views of civil society organizations (CSO) on policy issues. Selected CSO representatives met with donors during the Lisbon round of negotiations in March 2004. For more information, contact Antonio Ressano-Garcia at [aressano@adb.org](mailto:aressano@adb.org) or visit <http://www.adb.org/adf/>. ■



With decentralization putting the onus on education in Indonesia in the hands of district offices, schools, and communities, a project is aiming to turn this challenge into an opportunity

By Graham Dwyer  
External Relations Specialist

**O**n Bali's west coast, 3 hours from the tourist crowds of the island's capital Denpasar and popular beaches of Kuta, Nusa Dua, and Sanur, is a hidden world of poverty that visitors rarely get to see.

Jembrana, about 120 kilometers west of these tourist areas, is Bali's poorest district, where poverty levels approach 40%. Yet, outwardly, it is deceptively picture perfect, as with much of the Indonesian island. Kilometers of well-paved roads lead past neatly manicured rural communities, picturesque Hindu shrines, and stunning rice terraces overshadowed by distant volcanoes.

But this is a district where unemployment and underemployment are high, wages are low, and many people depend on casual or seasonal labor, mostly in the fields and on fishing boats. Such work nets them the equivalent of little more than \$1 per day—about the cost of a single drink in one of Kuta's clubs. That leaves little for basic subsistence, let alone health and education.

One such laborer is Antiri, who is only 32 but looks much older, her skin hardened by years of outdoor toil. "I am from a poor family," she says. "I have to work hard if I want to put aside some money to pay for schooling of my children."

One of her children, Susilo, 11, a student at Jembrana's Negara 4 Junior Secondary School, is receiving assistance under a scholarship supported by an ADB-funded Decentralized Basic Education Project in the province.



## BACK TO B

"We give the parents Rp60,000 (\$7) for equipment and clothes," explains Juminah, the school's headmistress, 47. "Three days later, the parents are required to report back to us what they have bought—bags, shoes, books, or uniforms."

The village head, school committee, and teachers get together to identify the most needy children at the junior school. So far, they have allocated scholarships to 12 children of the 148-pupil school.

But the scholarships are just one small part of a project, supported by an ADB loan of \$100 million and a Government contribution of \$25 million that is also refurbishing the schools themselves.

Approved in November 2001, the Decentralized Basic Education Project is being undertaken over 7 years in Bali and the neighboring islands of Nusa Tenggara Barat, one of Indonesia's poorest provinces with one of the lowest national enrollment rates for provincial primary, junior, and secondary education.

### Basic Education for All

Indonesia's drive to provide universal basic education, which covers nine years of primary and junior secondary schooling, predates by more than six years the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) 2 of achieving universal primary education by 2015. The country set an initial target of 2003. But as the economy reeled from the 1997 Asian financial crisis and political turmoil, this was deferred to 2008.

According to ADB's *Key Indicators of Developing Asia and the Pacific 2003*, Indonesia's net enrollment ratio in primary education fell from 95.4% in 1995 to 92.2% in 2000, following three years of economic and political turmoil. The decline was similar to that seen in other crisis-afflicted nations.

At the same time, the country has been wrestling with decentralization. Effective January 2001, management and financing of basic education were devolved to district governments. Basic education was previously managed centrally through complex and compartmentalized structures in three ministries.

"The move from central control to decentralization puts great responsibility on the planning, monitoring, and evaluation on the district offices, schools, and com-

**“The schools can now take charge of education rather than be centrally planned”**

Cecile Gregory, ADB Principal Project Specialist



Graham Dwyer (x2)

**BREAK TIME** The children of Embang Kauh 2 Primary School, Jembrana

# ASICS

munities themselves—and you have to build capacity for that,” says Dedi Karyana, the project’s secretary in Indonesia’s Ministry of National Education.

The project is equipping the schools and districts to fully cope with the challenges—and opportunities—posed by decentralization, explains Cecile Gregory, Principal Project Specialist and mission leader for the project. “The schools can now take charge of education rather than be centrally planned. The project aims to help this process so that the children will stay longer in school, achieve improved results, and have a curriculum that better serves their needs,” she says.

Since the academic year started in July 2003, the first funds from the project have been disbursed to 783 schools in the two island provinces. About 1,000 more will receive funds in the next academic year. Apart from the scholarships, these funds have been used mostly for light to medium physical school repairs and quality improvement, including the purchase of new books, reading aids, or training to upgrade the competence of teachers.

As the schools prepare the plans themselves, accountability to the local community for every rupiah spent is crucial,

explains Mr. Sugiana, the project manager at the district education office. “This is the first time block grants have been channeled directly to schools for the school committee to manage,” he says. “We go to great lengths to ensure transparency so that parents and the school committees know how the money is being used.”

The schools post their accounts under the project on notice boards for all to inspect and conduct outreach activities to ensure transparency. For example, headmistress Juminah reaches those that cannot or will not see the accounts by having the reports read out at local community meetings.

To ensure community participation in the school’s rehabilitation, Mr. Sugiana says that local skills are being harnessed, which also cuts the costs of the work. “Local communities have contributed through their time and labor to help improve the conditions of the school, and have also given money directly,” he adds.

## Physical Repairs

In Jembrana, the project is slowly transforming some of the dingiest parts of the schools from physical wrecks to being clean and functional.

Cratered, dusty concrete floors in the classrooms have been replaced with new white tiles, dirty scuffed walls have been replastered, and dangerously worn bamboo thatched ceilings have been replaced.

One such school is Yeh Umbul 3 Primary School in Mendoyo Subdistrict, where the headmaster Suama says, “The classrooms here were in a critical condition. We have repaired three out of five of them.” Besides gleaming bright rooms, the project is bringing electric lighting to the refurbished classrooms for the first time.

A few kilometers down the road, Embang Kauh 2 Primary School is hoping for connection to the electric grid from counterpart funds in the next stage of the project. An average of 40 children aged 7–11 are crammed in each of the six dark classrooms, which get only limited natural light from the neighboring paddy fields. “When the weather is rainy and dark, we don’t ask the students to study in these rooms, we try to find some other activity for them to do,” says headmaster Nurawa.

The poor conditions are matched by the state of the teaching aids. The students’ books are ragged and overused. The school

is soon expecting new books provided by the project.

In its first year, the physical improvements and school grants under the project are making a mark. Education officials say the dropout rate for basic education (age 7–12) has dropped from 5% two years ago to 0.02% in 2004, while the gross enrollment rate has risen by 117% from less than 90% over the same period.

But education remains an uphill struggle for the poor in Jembrana. “I am thankful for the extra money, otherwise I would not be able to send my daughter to school,” says fisherman Narka, whose 11-year-old daughter, Noviasitini, receives scholarship money at Negara 4 Junior Secondary School. When asked what she wants to be when she grows up, Noviasitini immediately says: “A doctor.” Her father cuts in, laughing: “I don’t have money for that.”

Attaining such a level of education may seem an insurmountable challenge to this father and child. But the message is getting through that education makes good economic sense for poor families, whose children will have higher earning potential, even if they may never fulfill all their dreams. And for headmistress Ms. Juminah, that provides a ray of hope.

“I try to motivate parents and children and stress the importance of finishing school, as motivation to attend school has been low in this area,” she says. “Now they are beginning to respond. I hope that these children in the future can now have a better life than their parents.” ■



HEADING HOME A group of girls

# MDG

## 2 Education



**MEETING MATTERS** Women elected as local representatives in Nepal share information on how they can be more effective in their roles

Rolie del Rosario

# Deciding For Themselves

Women elected to local government are learning the skills to participate fully in making decisions

By Judy Bryant

Consultant Writer and Editor

In March 1997 the King of Nepal issued an ordinance decreeing that 20% of local government seats be set aside for women. Two months later, in Nepal's local elections, more than 39,000 women assumed office for the first time for a five-year term. However, far from being a triumph for the newly elected women, they quickly learned that their new title carried little weight in the male-dominated village development committees (VDCs).

Though the Local Self-Governance Act of 1998 should have empowered elected women representatives, many remain unaware of their roles and responsibilities, and are yet to fully exercise their rights in the VDC decision-making processes.

Many elected women representatives still lack the information, confidence, and skills to participate fully in decision making, and many face discrimination from their male counterparts. Many men in the VDCs believe that the elected women lack education and capacity, and only hold their positions because of the mandate.

Some women representatives have been unaware of even the simplest information regarding their responsibilities, such as that ward and VDCs should meet once a month. They also did not know that each VDC has its own development fund of NRs500,000 (\$6,850), and that they, as VDC representatives, have a right to help determine how this money is spent.

## Empowering Messages

To empower the elected women ward representatives, ADB provided \$20,000 for the effort in September 2000 to the Centre for Development and Population Activities, the associate nongovernment organization of the Society for Research and Initiatives for Sustainable Technologies and Institutions (SRISTI). The project focused on training elected women ward representatives and helping boost their confidence and capacity to participate in local government. The project was implemented in four VDCs—one each in Lalitpur, Rupendehi, Dang, and Morang districts—representing the central, western, midwestern, and eastern regions of Nepal, respectively.

Women trainers were chosen in the four project VDCs. A needs assessment was made and a training manual prepared. VDC chairs, vice chairs, ward chairpersons, and potential and existing elected women ward representatives received training. Thirty-six ward-level training sessions for women were held on the roles and responsibilities of the VDC and of elected women ward representatives, budget allocation per VDC, gender equity and development, women's legal rights, leadership development, and crimes against women.

Of the 129 women participants, nine trainers and one supervisor were selected in each of the workshops. Thirty-six trainers and four supervisors across the four VDCs then learned to train women in their wards. Each trainer conducted nine two-day training workshops over a three-month period. Fifteen women participated in each workshop, resulting in the training of 1,215 women in each of the VDCs for a total of 4,860 across the project.

## Eager for Change

Although affiliated with different political parties, the women were united in their views and aspirations and keen to develop their respective VDCs. Some said that before being elected, they had little interest in or awareness of local government. Now they were eager to play an active—and growing—role in their wards.

One participant noted that women office bearers in her VDC had never met as a group before the project. After meeting with SRISTI project leaders, she and other participants suggested that elected women ward representatives convene before VDC meetings to discuss their shared concerns and develop proposals.

The project demonstrated that expanding opportunities for women to participate in public forums while eliciting support from their male counterparts is a workable strategy to support the gender mainstreaming process in local governance structures, and that a better informed and aware community is more likely to demand transparency in prioritizing development projects.

It is envisaged that this training should take place in the first year of each elected woman ward representative's five-year term so as to contribute to greater awareness of the roles and responsibilities of the VDC and the women representatives. ■



# Women Power

The Philippines is one of two Asian countries setting the standards in women leadership positions

By Rita Festin  
ADB Media Officer

**L**ed by the country's second woman president, Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, women in power in the Philippines are more prominent now than at anytime in the nation's past.

"Having more women in positions of power and decision making is a very important development," says Emmeline Verzosa, Executive Director of the National Commission on the Role of Filipino Women (NCRFW), a policymaking body under the Office of the President.

"They can redefine national priorities and policies and place women's concerns and experiences into the mainstream of politics," she says. "This makes the goal of gender equality much more attainable."

Of about 40 cabinet positions in the Philippine Government, 11 are currently held by women, the highest number of any administration. Legislation for women has also been unprecedented.

## Stronger Penalties

The country now has one of the more progressive laws against human trafficking with the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act of 2003, which criminalizes all forms of trafficking—with or without the consent of the victim—for sex tourism purposes, prostitution, mail-order brides, and pornography. It also imposes stiff penalties and provides emergency shelter, legal, medical, and psychological services to victims. It also penalizes customers of trafficked women in prostitution.

The Anti-Violence Against Women and their Children Act of 2004 criminalizes people who commit acts of physical, sexual, psychological (including verbal), and economic abuse and violence against women and their children in a marriage, when dating, or in a common-law relationship. For the first time, a Philippine law protects women who are abused by their spouses, former partners, or lesbian partners. It also



Rita Festin

**“Having more women in positions of power and decision making is a very important development”**

Emmeline Verzosa  
Executive Director, NCRFW

includes the “battered woman syndrome” as a justifying circumstance for self-defense, leaving the woman-victim free from any civil or criminal liability if she injures or kills her abuser.

The Philippines has been a model and pioneer in implementing a gender mainstreaming strategy in the bureaucracy. Government agencies are mandated to review their policies and programs, remove gender discriminatory practices, formulate and implement a gender and development plan, and allocate at least 5% of their total budget for gender and development. Foreign-assisted projects are not spared from checking their own gender biases.

The National Economic and Development Authority, with the NCRFW, and the gender and development focal points of overseas development assistance agencies—including ADB—will soon release new harmonized gender and develop-

ment guidelines for appraising, implementing, monitoring, and evaluating projects.

It is hoped this will realize fully the provision of the Women in Development and Nation-Building Act mandating all overseas development assistance to allocate 5–30% of the resources to women and gender concerns.

In the private sector, 85% of Philippine companies have women in senior management, according to newspaper reports citing Grant Thornton, a business advisory firm. It polled 6,900 medium-sized businesses from 26 major countries and territories in 2003 and found the Philippines rated a close second to Russia, which has almost 90%.

## Leading the Way

The United Nations (UN) also cited the Philippines as one of two Asian countries leading the way in having more women leadership positions. This is especially relevant at a time when most countries in Asia are falling behind. Erna Witoelar, the

UN's Special Ambassador for Millennium Development Goals, said the Philippines and India enjoy a high proportion of women in their legislatures and in local positions.

Elsewhere in Asia, women account for only 14.5% of lawmakers, according to Socorro Reyes, Senior Gender Adviser of the United Nations Development Programme. She was quoted in news-

papers as saying that despite laws and mechanisms in place, challenges remain and demands are daunting. Laws need to be enforced, monitored, and documented. Women in postconflict areas also have special needs that must be addressed. Awareness needs to be more widespread.

“Still, we remain optimistic that we are on the right track. We believe that women can meet the challenge of being a unifying force for peace and good governance in this critical stage when our country is driven by political divisions and conflicts,” adds Ms. Verzosa. ■

# MDG

## 3 Gender Equality



# WOMEN LEARN TO LEAD

Women in Bangladesh, Nepal, and Pakistan are overcoming discrimination and numerous obstacles to become leaders in their communities

By Jet Damazo

Consultant Public Relations Writer

**L**axmi Maharjan tried to stifle a sniff as she described how it was growing up as a girl in Lalipur district in Nepal. “When I was a child, I thought that to be born as a girl was bad luck,” she told the audience during a talk show, *In the Spotlight*, held at ADB headquarters during Women’s Week in March 2004. The talk show featured six women elected as local government representatives in Bangladesh, Nepal, and Pakistan.

Ms. Maharjan told of how discrimination against women began at home. Boys were given better food and clothing, while girls had to settle for leftovers. Boys were sent to school, and girls were not.

“I thought I didn’t have any fortune, which is why I was born a girl,” she said.

## More than Legal Limits

Gender discrimination remains a serious problem in their countries, where women make up the majority of the poor. Their respective governments have tried to address the problem by mandating that a percentage of local government seats be reserved for women, but legal limits are not the only barriers these women are up against. Bigger hurdles are educational and sociocultural constraints.

Nighat Afsar, for example, is a practicing lawyer in Pakistan but she said she still did not know what to do as district councilor when she was first elected.

At the start, women members of local councils often just sat during meetings, unable to participate, because they were not given instructions or ideas on what their role was supposed to be. But through training provided by ADB under a regional technical assistance grant for gender and governance, they learned of their roles and responsibilities, their powers, and the resources they can access.

“Now we are very aware of what we have to do, and we are doing a lot in our community,” said Ms. Afsar.

Another Pakistani district councilor, Farzana Rauf, from Jalipur district, had to deal not only with lack of awareness of what she was supposed to do, but also with men who were not receptive to her presence in the council.

## Overcoming Fears

“Not all of the men councilors were aware of the system,” she said. “They wanted to pass the budget without our approval. And when I took an interest in the budget, they

were scared that we, the women, would be a hurdle for them.”

After training and workshops, though, they were able to resolve their problems.

The same is true in Bangladesh. Monjura Khanam, a member of the Union Parishad, said she spent the first four months of her term establishing a good working relationship with her male counterparts because she knew that they were not comfortable with her.

Even some older women, added Deepali Chakorabarty, also a member of the Union Parishad, did not support them. “They tell us that the Union is not a place for us,” she said.

**DETERMINED**  
Farzana Rauf, Pakistani district councilor, took an interest in the budget and negotiated with the male councilors



Eric Sales (x2)

“I had to prove myself in so many dimensions”

Bimala Basnet, member, Women’s Forum in Nepal

For Bimala Basnet, a member of the Women's Forum in Nepal, the men—who likened the entry of women into the district/village council to a wild animal entering the community—were not the only problems.

Her family and friends were not supportive of her running for office. They tried to force her to resign after she was first elected.

To earn her family's support and the community's respect, she worked hard in her household while also attending to her responsibilities in the council.

### Proving Themselves

"I had to prove myself in so many dimensions—as a wife, as a mother, as a woman in the household and community, and as a leader," she said.

Despite all the difficulties they went through, these women persevered and are now all respected members of their community. Ms. Chakorabarty is involved in her community's primary education, road maintenance, and dispute resolution.

Ms. Maharjan, who was thrown out of her house by her parents when she ran for office, campaigned for a citizenship certificate for women, and worked for a community census by registering deaths and marriages.

Ms. Basnet, whose term in office has already expired, is honored in her community as a *nadis*, or judge. She says women had been influenced to think that they cannot be leaders. "Women are not aware of their own potential. Now that there are good, respected leaders, other women want to be leaders like us."

While a lot more remains to be done, they all feel that having women in government is an important step.

"I believe that if women participate in politics in the real sense, in decision making, there will be no discriminatory law at any level," said Ms. Afsar. "I think empowering women is empowering a nation." ■

# MDG

3 Gender Equality

# HIV/AIDS Prevention in Western Yunnan

A novel approach of combining prevention programs and infrastructure projects is having impact

By Eric Van Zant

Consultant Writer

**L**arge infrastructure projects, particularly major road construction, can contribute substantially to the spread of HIV/AIDS. They can also create an opportunity to spread knowledge about prevention of the disease. For that reason, ADB has begun to include prevention programs alongside its infrastructure projects. In a unique move, ADB is implementing an HIV/AIDS prevention plan to accompany the ADB-financed Western Yunnan Roads Development Project in the People's Republic of China (PRC).

"For the first time this approach was implemented on a PRC road project and, given the experience, I would strongly recommend that this be developed for all major infrastructure projects," says Jean-Marie Lacombe former officer in charge of PRC road projects, and currently Head, Portfolio Management, Indonesia Resident Mission.

The expressway, to be implemented under the project, will improve transport between Kunming and Ruili, a town on the Myanmar border and at the epicenter of the HIV epidemic in the PRC.

Anywhere between 15,000 and 20,000 workers will be employed each day during construction, which is due for completion around 2007. Typically young, the workers are usually without their families and are often vulnerable to unsafe sex.

This leaves workers, the women drawn to the sites to work as prostitutes, and spouses at home vulnerable to HIV/AIDS.

The program offers an opportunity to systematically create awareness and help protect people vulnerable to HIV/AIDS who would be otherwise difficult to reach.

In addition to the expressway component, the project will upgrade about 300 kilometers of local roads in some of the poorest areas of Yunnan.

Financed from the Poverty Reduction Cooperation Fund through funds provided by the United Kingdom's Department for International Development, the program will raise awareness on HIV/AIDS. It will promote safe-sex practices and use of condoms, and ensure HIV/AIDS prevention services are offered at contractors' work sites.

It will enhance the HIV/AIDS monitoring system, including the surveillance of the epidemic in the region.

In the past, dealing with problems like HIV/AIDS associated with major projects would have been dealt with through a provision in the contract with civil works contractors, says Mr. Lacombe. Designing and implementing a specific prevention program concurrently is expected to be more effective.

Mr. Lacombe says the experience, which involved concerted efforts to gain agreement from various PRC government departments, can be applied in other countries.

Including disease prevention in the design of large projects is in keeping with the ADB's strategy for reducing poverty and with the Millennium Development Goals. ■



# MDG

6 HIV/AIDS



## Battling ingrained and unhealthy lifestyles through community partnerships with the health establishment is helping lower maternal and infant mortality rates, and reduce disease levels in rural Indonesia

By **Graham Dwyer**

External Relations Specialist

**F**or the ramshackle village of Tajepan, deep in Indonesia's rural Central Kalimantan Province, the mighty Kapuas River brings life and livelihood—as well as death and disease.

The tenant farmers and fisherfolk, living in their simple wooden dwellings on stilts along its banks, draw on the river for their income and sustenance. They use it for washing clothes and dishes, bathing, and drinking. But it also serves as their toilet and waste dump.

"I am immune to any problems from the river water," declares Basrah, who lives with her family in a wooden shack atop the river. At the back of her house is a platform at the water's edge where she collects

into raising family sanitation and health standards in remote rural areas of five far-flung provinces of Indonesia—Bengkulu, Jambi, Central and South Kalimantan, and North Sumatra.

Approved in 1996 with a loan of \$45 million, the project has been working in the villages to create partnerships between families and the staff of the *puskesmas*, the vast network of local health centers. Together they have been trying to improve family health and nutrition, lower maternal and infant mortality rates, reduce disease levels, and raise life expectancy—targets that today are also embraced in the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

"Through assistance such as this project, ADB has been supporting the basic priorities that have, subsequently, been formulated into the MDGs," says Jacques Jeugmans, ADB Senior Social Sectors



# GOOD HEALTH BEGINS

all her family's drinking and washing water. Just above is the makeshift toilet, a small opening below which flows the murky brown river waters.

A weather-beaten and wizened 30 something—she has no idea of her exact age—she has borne six children, the second of whom died in infancy of diarrhea. But she does not make any connection with her contaminated water source.

"It was not the fault of the river water, it was just the season for diarrhea—everybody had it," she says.

Changing such ingrained and unhealthy attitudes, which have a profound impact particularly on infant and child health, has been a slow process in rural areas where poverty, ignorance, and isolation form an unholy trinity against improving family health and nutrition habits.

But an ADB-funded Family Health and Nutrition Project has been making inroads

Specialist and original mission leader for the project.

By the early 1990s, when the project was being drawn up, Indonesia had made rapid progress in improving its health indicators. This trend continued through the project period, despite economic and political turmoil, and the fallout from growing decentralization.

According to ADB's *Key Indicators of Developing Asia and the Pacific 2003*, Indonesia's infant deaths declined from 46 per 1,000 live births in 1995 to 33 in 2001. Over the same period, maternal

mortality per 100,000 live births more than halved from 470 to 213. Despite a narrowing gap, these figures are still high compared with Indonesia's neighbors, such as the Philippines.

"Improving maternal and child health was the ultimate goal of the project," says Sulistianto, the South Kalimantan Project Coordinator. "The most important issue has been to change the behavior of the community and create 'family-friendly health centers' that are more client oriented."

Over the years, a combination of traditional beliefs and low-quality services

**“The most important issue has been to change the behavior of the community and create ‘family-friendly health centers’ that are more client oriented”**

Sulistianto, South Kalimantan Project Coordinator



# NS AT HOME



had contributed to low use of health facilities. The project aimed to mobilize community groups, comprising 10 groups of 10 people in each village, to identify their problems and take responsibility for addressing them.

## Prioritizing Health Problems

Under the project, village groups were set up to discuss and prioritize local health problems. "Among the issues that came up repeatedly were the need for clean water, which is more effective in the long term to fight diarrhea and skin diseases than drugs, and better nutrition," Mr. Jeugmans adds.

The role of the health center is to provide medical advice and recommend solutions to the problems identified. Each family received a health card listing the priorities that had been established in their consultations with the local community. This gives a complete record of the family's health status and basic needs.

Another priority identified under the project was raising incomes. The project, using also the Government's counterpart funds, thus set up small loans to create income-generating schemes for the members, including cattle raising, duck farming, and savings and loan activities. Revolving funds were also made available for members to upgrade their homes.

Graham Dwyer (x3)



# MDGs

**4** Child Mortality

**5** Maternal Health

For example, in Kurau, in the Tanah Laut district of Pelaihari, South Kalimantan, the fund was used as seed money to build family toilets. A small loan was given to two families. When they built their facility and repaid the loan, the repayment would provide funds and a model for the next families, and so on, in a chain. Now almost all families in the area have their own toilets.

To spread the message on health and nutrition, especially to those in more inaccessible areas, the health centers have resorted to varied means, including door-to-door outreach conducted by midwives (see story, p 29).

Fahrinawati, a midwife handling Haniljayam village about 3 kilometers from the Kurau health center, services about 30 women needing neonatal care or information about contraceptive options. “In the past, families came to the clinic only when they faced some serious illness,” she says. “Now we find it much more effective to go to the patients as part of our outreach.

While such midwives play a key role in maintaining personal contact with patients, there are other means of conducting health campaigns. For example, Kurau health center broadcasts its own community radio shows each morning, offering a mix of entertainment and music interspersed with health messages on sanitation and problem illnesses, such as malaria. In Pelaihari, staff visit schools where they sing, hold drawing competitions and traditional performances, and even sometimes teach in the classrooms directly.

The health centers’ message on the importance of sanitation, clean water, and a balanced diet that includes fruit and vegetables—all of which have a particular impact on child and maternal health—is getting through in some areas.

### Helping Empower

“The project has helped empower the community, making the people well informed and willing to access the health center,” says R.A. Vivi Mariana, who has been working for four years as the doctor in charge of the Pelaihari center as part of her government requirement to be assigned to remote areas for five years following medical training.

“In the past, the focus was on curative treatment. Now we do outreach work on

Graham Dwyer

**SAFETY FIRST** Prenatal checks at Kuala Kapua’s Health Center, Central Kalimantan



**“Among the issues that came up repeatedly were the need for clean water and better nutrition”**

Jacques Jeugmans, ADB Senior Social Sectors Specialist

prevention and promotion,” she says. “People need to know how to come to the health center. But more important is how to prevent sickness in the first place.”

However, getting people to look for treatment from health professionals is only half the battle. They need better services once they get there. The project has trained health clinic staff to take more client-oriented approaches, working with the community health groups rather than imposing the central Government’s health priorities.

Still, as the case of Tajepan shows, health behavior cannot be changed overnight. “It will take years to see the full impact of the project as it takes a long time to alter people’s behavior,” says Manahan Pangaribuan, the new head of health services for South Kalimantan. “The challenge is how to replicate the project in other districts, as funds are limited.

“We have been persuading heads of districts to provide counterpart funding,” he says. “We will see later in the year if we have been successful. We are also hoping to find linkages with new and future ADB health projects.”

ADB recently approved a Second Decentralized Health Services Project (covering South and Central Kalimantan),

which could continue the activities of the Family Health and Nutrition Project. To continue support to the Government in improving nutrition and household food security, ADB last year approved \$500,000 for a technical assistance grant that will design an urban nutrition management model through a public-private partnership, in support of the first MDG of eradicating extreme poverty and hunger by 2015.

For many, the Family Health and Nutrition Project, which closed at the end of 2003, has already marked a revolution in their approach to health, hygiene, and nutrition. Asmail Idup, one of the group leaders of the health membership scheme in Kurau, proudly shows off his new toilet and water faucet, provided under the project, at the back of his simple wooden dwelling.

“Before, we would just get water from anywhere and so suffered frequent ill health,” he says. “The project has taught us to use clean water and now we don’t have any big health problems.”

His wife, Samiah, adds: “The most important thing we have gained is knowledge about our health because, before, we didn’t have that. Being healthy is more precious than gold.” ■



# Fighting Ignorance

Traditional medicine women are key to promoting cleanliness and better health

**I**n the war against malnutrition and disease among Indonesia's rural women and young children, the midwives are the frontline troops in a two-pronged campaign against ignorance and traditional practices. For years, Indonesian women have depended largely on untrained traditional medicine women, known as *dukun*, for their maternity and child-rearing needs, sometimes with disastrous consequences.

"When people are sick, they often go to the traditional healers, the *dukun*," says Dr. Taufiqurrahman, in charge of the Kurau health center. "For a case such as diarrhea, the *dukun* might administer herbs or just give water accompanied by a special prayer. Building on the belief that sickness is caused by bad spirits, some *dukun* will take a gulp full of water and spray it at the patient with their mouth."

Yet for many women having babies, the *dukun* provide an affordable, highly convenient, and seemingly more comprehensive service than midwives, who receive formal training following high school and are paid about \$60–\$90 per month.

"*Dukun* are willing to wait for days for a baby to be delivered, while the midwife will come only when it is time for the birth," says Ms. Fahrinawati, a midwife at Kurau. "Also, women are afraid to get stitches and injections that the midwives might administer. Plus the *dukun* are often willing to take care of the baby once it is born and even wash up after birth."

She said the quality of *dukun* has been improving, as they now receive training from local districts in three basics—cleanliness in the area where the delivery takes place, clean equipment, and clean hands.

But some of the traditional nutritional practices can be damaging to babies and mothers. For instance, Ms. Fahrinawati says, *dukun* commonly instruct the mother to give honey to the newborn baby in the belief it will stimulate them to suck. "Sometimes, the babies are even prescribed crushed banana to try to settle the stomachs," she says. "The result is a bloated stomach and chronic constipation as the baby can't digest the food." Ms. Fahrinawati remembers



**CHANGING TIMES** A young woman (left) receives contraceptive pills from the health center; A midwife making her rounds (below)

**“People are so much better informed about health and nutrition. Now there is more knowledge, so it is easier to work in the local community”**

Fahrinawati, a midwife at Kurau

that before ADB's Family Health and Nutrition Project, a baby in her area died from such chronic constipation.

"But that would not happen now," she adds. "People are so much better informed about health and nutrition. Now there is more knowledge, so it is easier to work in the local community." ■



# MDGs

**4** Child Mortality

**5** Maternal Health

# HEALING CAMBODIA'S HEALTH CARE

By Eric Van Zant  
Consultant Writer

**C**ambodia's poor, when they get sick, can be more likely to flee public health care workers than to seek advice or treatment. Many will self-treat or call in traditional healers before showing up at government-run clinics.

"I was afraid of injections. When I saw the health staff come to my village, I took my little baby with me and hid in the bushes behind the village," relates one mother in the Memut District of Kampong Cham Province.

At an average age of 57 years, Cambodians die earlier than their Vietnamese or Thai neighbors, have more babies, die more often from malaria, and are more likely to die when giving birth according to the United Nations Development Programme. After 25 years of upheaval in the country, Cambodia's health situation is among the world's worst.

A government program that contracts private organizations to run and upgrade public health services is helping change that. It offers a unique way to achieve quick results and underscores the importance of innovation in working toward the Millennium Development Goals.

The widespread success of the program, started in 1998, has convinced officials to expand contracting from 5 to 10 of the country's 76 districts.

The program is part of the Health Sector Support Project financed through a \$20 million loan from ADB. The loan is also helping construct and renovate health centers and hospitals, and support disease-control campaigns against HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases.

A new program is helping elevate Cambodia's health care service from disarray into a system the community can afford and trust

Under the contracting system, use of public services has risen sharply, particularly among the poor. At the same time, average out-of-pocket health costs plunged, dropping by more than \$30 per capita for the bottom half of the population in some project districts.

## High Price for Poor Health

Poor health comes at a high price in Cambodia. On average, Cambodians spend \$33 per person each year to treat sickness, compared with government health expenditure of just \$2 per person. They often pay ill-informed drug sellers, untrained healers, or freelancing government health workers for help—and the expense often destroys families, homes, and lives.

"Expenditure on health care is one of the main reasons people are pushed into poverty—they have to sell off assets to pay for services," says Indu Bhushan, Principal Project Economist, ADB Mekong Department.

The contracted clinics are often more effective and offer treatment closer to home, which saves on transport.

By paying roughly \$4 per person a year to contract health services, the government program can, in a short time, lift an enormous burden from thousands of the poorest people and provide more professional care. It underscores the importance of coopera-



**“Expenditure on health care is one of the main reasons people are pushed into poverty—they have to sell off assets to pay for services”**

Indu Bhushan  
ADB Principal  
Project Economist

tion between ADB, government and, nongovernment organizations (NGOs) in designing projects.

Villagers are responding. The same mother who used to hide in the bushes says,



Ram Cabrera (x3)



**MATERNAL INSTINCT**  
Increased numbers  
of pregnant women  
are seeking care at  
Cambodia's contracted  
clinics

"One day my baby had a high fever. The health worker in my village advised me to bring him to a hospital in Memut. There they showed me the importance of immunization and prevention of malaria. Now every month when the health worker or the midwife calls, I always take my baby."

According to Save the Children Australia, which was contracted in the Memut district, "The wide level of community participation has led to an overall increase in the number of patients seeking care and number of pregnant women receiving iron supplements (currently 99%). All children in our area now receive vitamin A supplements and have access to measles immunization."

### Better Clinics

NGOs entice people in need of care with clean clinics, professional and respectful services, and successful treatment. They use enforceable contracts, financial incentives, user fees, and achievable goals to motivate staff. Cambodia's time under the Khmer Rouge and the years of civil conflict that followed ravaged its health system. New services had to be created from scratch, and development has been in progress for just over a decade.

Under the 1998 plan, contractors were chosen through competitive bidding to manage health services in five districts. In two, known as contracting-out areas, the contractor had full responsibility for delivering services—including hiring, firing, setting wages, and allocating resources.

Contracting-in, by contrast, provided private-sector management within a public sector setup. Contractors gave management support to civil service health staff and could not hire or fire, but could request transfers and receive a budget for incentives and operating expenses.

All five districts improved service coverage in a short time, the strongest being the contracted-out districts.

The use of health services among the poorest half of the population increased by nearly 30 percentage points in the contracted-out areas during the pilot program, as more and more people turned up at the clinics.

One villager, Khun Srean, came to the Memut Referral Hospital for delivery of her third child. "I prefer it because it costs less, the hospital is clean and close to my house, and the food and services are good."

In the expansion to 10 districts, however, it was decided after consultation between ADB, NGOs, and the Government to use a hybrid system based mostly on the contracting-in model.

Contracts with NGOs are still at a fixed priced and based on performance, and the contractor retains complete flexibility in using whatever approaches and strategies are deemed effective.

Contracting-out created friction with civil servants and politicians concerned about losing control over health care. "The Government was reluctant to expand the program, and so relinquished control of the health services. The results convinced them," says Mr. Bhushan.

### Financial Incentives

Overall care improved for several reasons, says HealthNet International, one of the contracted NGOs. Of critical importance was an end to private practice among public workers.

Salaries were so low in the government clinics, at \$10–\$30 per month, that health workers had to seek other income. Many openly sold their services outside of the health centers and could earn 10 times more than their official salaries.

Payment was raised to levels high enough to get staff to dedicate 100% of their time to the public system. Doctors and district managers settled for salaries from \$120–\$180 per month.

"Existing district health managers have worked in an environment where it was unwise to make unpopular decisions. Many managers in charge are afraid to discipline staff as they fear dreadful repercussions," says HealthNet.

An outsider is not hindered by long-standing relationships with staff and managers, and with reasonable incentives can get acceptance of new ideas.

"Civil servants expect life-long employment, and generally speaking, do not take risks that could jeopardize that position. The contract manager (by contrast) knows he has to score within the contract period," says HealthNet. Failure to perform could mean no renewal.

By boosting salaries and putting in financial incentives, NGOs are getting clinic staff to stop private practice and ensure quality of care. Efficient and cleaner clinics are getting noticed, and patients are abandoning often more expensive outside treatment, and spreading the word.

Cambodia's health care system remains rudimentary. But by building new facilities and contracting the management to private groups under ADB's project, it is improving. ■

# MDGs

## 4 Child Mortality

## 5 Maternal Health





#### GETTING CONNECTED

More than 70% of Phnom Penh now has access to the city's water distribution network

In 1993 the people of Phnom Penh lacked a reliable water supply. After a complete revamp of its main water supplier, all that has changed

# THIRST FOR CHANGE

By Judy Bryant

Consultant Writer and Editor

Open a water faucet in Cambodia's capital in 1993 and out would come little more than a trickle—if you were lucky. Phnom Penh's water supply and drainage systems were in disarray, having deteriorated over the years due to war, poor management, and lack of maintenance.

Only 20% of the people in Phnom Penh had access to water supplied by the Phnom Penh Water Supply Authority (PPWSA). The organization's staff of 500 was largely underqualified, underpaid, inefficient, and lacked motivation. Nepotism was rife, and morale and discipline among the workers were low. Upper management put its own needs before the interests of PPWSA, according to Ek Sonn Chan, the then newly installed PPWSA Director.

The Government of Cambodia had given him the task of turning around an organization that was “in a sad state of chaos and disarray,” as he tells it.

However, Mr. Chan had a vision of a PPWSA that was efficient, and well run—an organization where the workers prided themselves on the quality of their service delivery. To achieve this, hard decisions would mean job losses and tightening lax work habits, a harder line against corruption, and installation of a new generation of managers.

#### Inefficiency Flushed Out

At the time, the number of PPWSA connections totaled 26,881, only 13% of which were metered, resulting in inaccurate and improper billing.

In 1993 alone, 300 illegal connections were discovered, and most of these had been installed by PPWSA staff for their own benefit. The going rate for an illegal connection was around \$1,000. The PPWSA earned just riel (KR)0.7 billion (\$175,400), against an operating cost of KR1.4 billion (\$350,900).

What was needed, Mr. Chan says, was a change of culture—a complete restructuring of the organization, which would result in increased revenue while rehabilitating PPWSA's distribution network and treatment plants.

In cleaning up PPWSA, Mr. Chan also

Halsey Street

sought to support the Government's efforts to supply clean and safe water directly to poor families.

Now, more than 10 years on, each of the 82,000 PPWSA connections in Phnom Penh is metered, and 70% of the city is connected to the water distribution network.

### Challenges Ahead

"Probably the most difficult of all," says Mr. Chan, "was to increase the water tariff to cover its cost. The tariff was to be increased in three steps over a seven-year period. However, after the second increase in 2001, PPWSA found that its revenue already covered the cost of supply because of the higher collection ratio, the drop in illegal connections, and reduction of unaccounted-for water.

PPWSA's whole distribution network was rehabilitated, with a repair team on standby 24 hours a day. The public responded to encouragement by PPWSA to inform it of leaks, which were then quickly repaired.

By 1996, with an ADB concessional loan of special drawing rights (SDR) 13.7 million (\$20 million equivalent), and funding from the World Bank and the governments of France and Japan, PPWSA embarked on renewing and rehabilitating its distribution network, a task completed by 2002. New treatment plants were built and old ones rehabilitated.

### Leadership, Innovation

In restructuring PPWSA, Mr. Chan gave higher management more direct responsibility. "Members of the more dynamic, younger generation who possessed better qualifications were promoted and given more responsibilities," he says. The number of PPWSA employees was reduced to less than 400.

Salaries were increased, in some cases by up to 10 times, and performance-based bonuses were introduced. Those who performed badly were penalized.

PPWSA started to install water meters for all connections, and set up an inspection team to stop illegal connections. It revised and improved its consumer files and began to educate the public, especially high-ranking families, other government agencies, and even PPWSA top management, of the importance of paying their water bills. The bill collection thus im-

proved from 50% in 1993 to 99% in 2004.

### Building on Success

Because of its higher collection ratio, PPWSA has fully recovered its costs and is now seeking to expand its network by aiming at 100% connection by 2005.

Many factors contributed to the improvement in the operations of PPWSA, says Xiaoyan Ye, Principal Project Specialist, ADB Mekong Department. "Political stability, strong government support, and external assistance from different development agencies are but a few."

But the most important factor comes from within the organization itself, he says. "The success of this public water enterprise is, to a large extent, the result of a champion of the cause in the person of Director Chan."

Mr. Chan's leadership was recognized at ADB's Water Week 2004 when PPWSA won the ADB Water Prize 2004. The theme of Water Week 2004 was "Water for the Poor—Setting the Rules and Finding the Money," and was designed to emphasize ADB's focus on the poor and its Water for All policy.

Addressing Water Week 2004, ADB President Tadao Chino said, "The poor often don't get the water they need so desperately. This lack of access to water has much to do with governance and the way water is managed."

"The water crisis in our region is essentially a crisis of governance," Mr. Chino said. Water Week 2004's theme reinforced ADB's commitment to the Millennium Development Goals, including the target of halving the number of people without safe drinking water and sanitation by the year 2015.

The award recognized PPWSA's leadership and innovation in project financing and good governance, consistent with and supportive of ADB's Water for All policy, Mr. Chino said.

With good leadership and improved governance, Phnom Penh residents have a water supply 24 hours a day, in contrast to 10 hours in 1993. The city's poor have better access to clean water through PPWSA's improved financial strength, which has enabled it to expand services to poor areas where piped water supplies were once just a dream.

Despite these successes, the work is far



Halsey Street

**“The poor often don't get the water they need so desperately. This lack of access to water has much to do with governance and the way water is managed”**

Tadao Chino, ADB President



Richie Abrina

from over. According to Mr. Chan, PPWSA still faces two major challenges: sanitation and 100% connection. ■

To read more about ADB's water projects, go to <http://www.adb.org/water>

# MDGs

**4** Child Mortality

**5** Maternal Health

**7** Environment

# FATAL ATTRACTION

An increase in mobility and worker migration in the Greater Mekong Subregion has coincided with a rapid rise in the rate of HIV/AIDS infection. Steps to counter the spread of the disease are showing results

By Eric Van Zant  
Consultant Writer

**S**hack-like brothels line the streets of the port city of Sihanoukville, in southern Cambodia. In this hub mainly for fishermen from neighboring countries, dozens of young women aged 16 to 21 offer their bodies for as little as \$2.

In Sihanoukville, new port facilities are being built with help from the Government of Japan, and while this growth attracts more migrant workers, it also draws many young women who come to work in the brothels with dreams of making money for themselves and their families. Too often, these young women leave not only with unfulfilled dreams, but also with HIV/AIDS.

Cambodia, Myanmar, and Thailand are at the center of an HIV/AIDS epidemic in the Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS).

"Cambodia remains the biggest problem now, with 2.6% of the adult population infected," says Indu Bhushan, Principal Project Economist, ADB Mekong Department.

Yet, ironically, it is in these countries that officials are coming to grips with the problem, and infection rates have stabilized, or are slowing.

"This is because of strong political commitment, and a wide range of effective prevention programs," says Mr. Bhushan.

In Sihanoukville, as in the rest of Cambodia, all brothels have a policy of 100% condom use. Brothel workers are checked weekly for signs of sexually transmitted diseases (STDs).

UNAIDS says the Cambodian Ministry of Health recently estimated that without this intervention in the late 1990s, HIV/AIDS infections would have been three times higher than they are now.

## Mobile Infection

More than 1,000 kilometers to the northwest of Cambodia, in Yunnan Province of the People's Republic of China (PRC), and also in Myanmar, the spread of HIV/AIDS is causing concern.

The city of Ruili in Yunnan Province, located on the old Burma Road bordering Myanmar's Shan State, is a major transit route for booming regional trade.

VICTIM An AIDS patient and her medicine



**Cambodia, Myanmar, and Thailand are at the center of an HIV/AIDS epidemic in the Greater Mekong Subregion**



Truck drivers, traders, and traffickers of contraband ply the route from Kunming in the PRC, to Mandalay in Myanmar, and beyond. Many will rest at one of Ruili's brothels where young women from the surrounding tribal hills work.

Population Services International, a nongovernment organization, says Ruili is a hub for intravenous drug users and sex workers from all over the PRC and Myanmar. It also says Ruili township has the PRC's highest rate of HIV/AIDS infection.

Ruili is north of the Golden Triangle, the opium-producing area straddling northern Thailand, Myanmar, and the Lao People's Democratic Republic.

HIV/AIDS first appeared in Yunnan Province in 1987, shortly after the first reported cases in the PRC. By the early 1990s, the epidemic was found mainly among intravenous drug users along the Myanmar-Yunnan border. According to the PRC Ministry of Health, the spread of HIV/AIDS increased at an annual average rate of 30% until 2000. It rose 58% in 2001, and 17% in the first half of 2002.

### No Time to Lose

In Myanmar, meanwhile, there is no time to lose. The 2003 UNAIDS epidemic update says intravenous drug use and commercial sex are responsible for most HIV/AIDS infections. It says migrant workers,

especially gem miners and loggers, are becoming a major conduit for the spread of the virus.

"Among the three Asian countries hardest hit by the epidemic, only in Myanmar do national HIV infection rates continue to rise," says UNAIDS.

"It remains to be

### Rapid Increase

In 1999, about 420,000 people were known to be infected with HIV/AIDS in South and Southeast Asia. That figure has increased to more than 5.6 million people in 2003.

"Thailand spends about \$1 per capita and Cambodia about 50 cents per capita on HIV/AIDS prevention and care. Viet Nam spends less than 10 cents per capita and Myanmar less than one cent," says Mr. Bhushan.

UNAIDS says crude estimates suggest public and donor spending on HIV/AIDS prevention in 2003 probably did not exceed \$200 million. To adequately fund prevention efforts the amount would need to rise to \$2.2 billion in 2004 and \$5.1 billion by 2007.

Mr. Bhushan says that despite the apparent stabilization in the rate of new HIV/AIDS infections in Cambodia and Thailand, the burden of HIV/AIDS-related illnesses will triple over the next 20 years unless known prevention measures are backed with funding.

He says ADB needs to do more. Among its programs, an \$8 million project supported by the Japan Fund for Poverty Reduction to boost social marketing of condoms in HIV/AIDS hot spots is entering its third and last year. ADB is also promoting a "Toolkit for HIV Prevention" among mobile populations in the GMS.

Mr. Bhushan says a more comprehensive ADB policy would have three major focus points: an emphasis on policy dialogue for public expenditure management supporting HIV/AIDS during country programming; more effective integration of HIV/AIDS issues in infrastructure projects; and more stand-alone support for HIV/AIDS prevention and care.

Meeting the HIV/AIDS challenge is key to achieving the Millennium Development Goals. Goal 6 targets a halt in the spread of HIV/AIDS by 2015 and the beginning of a reversal trend.

Much remains to be done. ■



## Meeting the HIV/AIDS challenge is key to achieving the Millennium Development Goals

ADB is participating in the Western Yunnan Roads Development Project, which will improve access between Ruili and Myanmar. However, with greater mobility of people, including seasonal migrant workers, comes the risk of an increase in the speed of transmission of HIV/AIDS.

Migration, mobility, and HIV/AIDS are clearly interlinked, according to an ADB document. "High rates of HIV infection are generally found along transport routes, in border areas, and in regions experiencing higher seasonal mobility."

To help counter this, ADB is implementing an HIV/AIDS prevention program alongside the road project, a unique move that project officers say can be applied to other infrastructure projects in other countries (*see story, p. 25*).

seen whether Myanmar's nascent prevention efforts will limit HIV prevalence to the 1–2% reported among 15–24-year-olds in urban areas," says UNAIDS. Overall, urban adult prevalence (15–49 years old) was from 1.1% to 2.2% of the population in 2002.

In Cambodia and Thailand, the numbers remain high, but HIV/AIDS prevalence has been checked by promoting greater condom use in the commercial sex industry.

In 2001, 670,000 people were known to be infected with HIV/AIDS in Thailand. In Cambodia, 170,000 were known to be infected, and the infection rate has slowed to 2.6% in 2002, from 4% two years before. In Viet Nam, 130,000 people were known to be infected with HIV/AIDS in 2001.

# MDG

## 6 HIV/AIDS



Ram Cabrera

**ACHIEVABLE?** The Asian Development Bank takes pride in its role in helping its developing member countries—and the entire region—achieve the Millennium Development Goals. But meeting them by 2015 will be a challenge, with many countries potentially falling short of achieving some or all of the targets. ADB is committed to creating an environment for achieving the MDGs, a shared responsibility of all development stakeholders. This issue of *ADB Review* highlights MDG issues and provides examples of innovative projects that are eradicating extreme poverty and hunger, strengthening primary education, promoting gender equality, improving health, fighting HIV/AIDS, protecting the environment, and promoting partnership.

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